

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-38 (canceled)

39. (currently amended) A buoyancy apparatus for providing tension for an offshore riser comprising:
- a) at least one buoyancy element; ~~and~~
 - b) a frame comprising a plurality of vertical members externally disposed to said at least one buoyancy element, said frame secured to said riser to allow buoyancy to be transferred to said riser, wherein at least one of said plurality of vertical members is continuous and extends the vertical length of said at least one buoyancy element; and
 - c) a plurality of connectors securing said vertical members to said riser.
40. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame is directly secured to said riser.
41. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame is indirectly secured to said riser through a riser stem pipe.
42. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame is comprised of tubular members.
43. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame is neutrally or positively buoyant in said water.
44. (canceled)
45. (canceled)
46. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 39, wherein said frame is constructed to carry loads exerted by external forces.

47. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame is constructed to carry loads exerted by external forces selected from loads caused by movement of a host facility, wave action and current action.
48. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said buoyancy element comprises a buoyancy can.
49. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said buoyancy element comprises syntactic foam.
50. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said ~~frame further comprises a~~ plurality of connectors comprise plates, perforated plates, radial arms or combinations thereof.
51. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 50, wherein said plurality of connectors comprises a first connector positioned above said at least one buoyancy element and a second connector positioned below said at least one buoyancy element.
52. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 51, wherein said plurality of connectors further comprises one or more connectors positioned between said first connector and said second connector.
53. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 52, wherein said one or more connectors comprise perforated plates.
54. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 50, wherein said plurality of connectors comprise radial arms.
55. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 50, wherein said plurality of connectors comprise a plate.
56. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 50, wherein said plurality of connectors comprise at least one of radial arms and a plate.
57. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 46, wherein said frame further comprises at least one bracing member external to said buoyancy element.

58. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 57, wherein said at least one bracing member comprises at least one of a diagonal bracing member and a horizontal bracing member.
59. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 57, wherein said at least one bracing member is radially arched.
60. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 48, further comprising one or more gas service lines, wherein said lines are positioned adjacent to said frame and adjacent to said buoyancy can and enter said buoyancy can at the bottom of said buoyancy can.
61. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 48, further comprising one or more gas service lines, wherein said lines are positioned within said frame and enter said buoyancy can at the bottom of said buoyancy can.
62. (currently amended) A buoyancy apparatus for providing tension for an offshore riser comprising:
- a) a plurality of buoyancy elements arranged in series along the length of said riser; and
 - b) a continuous external frame around said plurality of buoyancy elements, said external frame secured to said riser to allow buoyancy to be transferred to said riser; and
 - c) a plurality of connectors securing said vertical members to said riser;
- thereby eliminating stiffness discontinuity along the buoyancy apparatus.
63. (canceled) ~~A buoyancy apparatus according to claim 62, wherein said buoyancy elements are arranged in series along the length of said riser.~~
64. (currently amended) A buoyancy apparatus according to claim ~~63~~ 62, wherein said continuous external frame is comprised of a plurality of external frame sections, said plurality of external frame sections thereby forming said continuous external frame.
65. (previously presented) A buoyancy apparatus according to claim 64, wherein said plurality of external frame sections includes a lower positioned external frame section and a higher positioned external frame section, said lower positioned external frame section connected to said higher positioned external frame section.

66. (previously presented) A buoyancy apparatus according to claim 65, wherein said lower positioned external frame section includes a lower mating element, said higher positioned external frame section includes a higher mating element, said lower mating element is connected to said higher mating element, thereby forming a connection.
67. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 65, wherein said continuous external frame comprises a plurality of vertical members.
68. (canceled) ~~The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67, wherein said continuous external frame further comprises one or more connector(s).~~
69. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67 ~~68~~, wherein said ~~one or more~~ plurality of connectors comprise perforated plates.
70. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67 ~~68~~, wherein said ~~one or more~~ plurality of connectors comprise radial arms.
71. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67 ~~68~~, wherein said ~~one or more~~ plurality of connectors comprise a plate.
72. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67 ~~68~~, wherein said continuous external frame is directly secured to said riser through said ~~one or more~~ plurality of connectors.
73. (currently amended) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67 ~~68~~, wherein said continuous external frame is indirectly secured to said riser through said ~~one or more~~ plurality of connectors, said connector(s) secured to a riser stem pipe.
74. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 67, wherein said continuous external frame is comprised of tubular members.
75. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 74, wherein said continuous external frame further comprises at least one bracing member external to said buoyancy elements.
76. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 75, wherein said at least one bracing member comprises at least one of a diagonal bracing member and a horizontal bracing member.

77. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 75, wherein said at least one bracing member is radially arched.
78. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 74, wherein said continuous external frame is neutrally or positively buoyant in water.
79. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 65, wherein said continuous external frame is constructed to carry loads exerted by external forces.
80. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 79, wherein said continuous external frame is constructed to carry loads exerted by external forces selected from loads caused by movement of a host facility, wave action and current action.
81. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 65, wherein said buoyancy elements comprise a buoyancy can.
82. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 81, further comprising one or more gas service lines, wherein said lines are positioned adjacent to said continuous external frame and adjacent to said buoyancy can and enter said buoyancy can at the bottom of said buoyancy can.
83. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 81, further comprising one or more gas service lines, wherein said lines are positioned within said continuous external frame and enter said buoyancy can at the bottom of said buoyancy can.
84. (previously presented) The buoyancy apparatus of claim 65, wherein said buoyancy elements comprise syntactic foam.